
Frant. Bednář

THE TRANSFER
OF GERMANS
FROM
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*from the ideological
and ecclesiastical standpoint*

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THE TRANSFER OF GERMANS

With Compliments from
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The year 1945!

Victory had been achieved and the exhausted victors, including renewed Czechoslovakia, started to build up a new life out of the ruins. The legacy of the years which commenced with Munich was terrible, and the veil which had concealed all the material and cultural misery of the people during the occupation was torn from the face of the land.

One of the duties of the Republic was to pass judgment on the guilty ones of the preceding years. With the assent of the Great Powers, over two million German inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia were transferred to Germany. The civilized world pondered on whether this measure was right. Human feeling prevailed over the conception of justice and the transfer was only seen as a harsh and inhuman measure. Politicians were considering whether the situation in Germany, confused and difficult as it was, would be still further complicated by the influx of the transferees, and all this corroded the sympathies felt by the world towards Czechoslovakia and called for an analysis of this far-reaching and severe action.

The *political* explanation of the transfer is simple and well known. The Germans did wrong in the attitude they adopted to the Czechoslovak Republic during the growth of Hitler's power, and they were the instigators of the attack on the Czechoslovak Republic and of the greatest suffering inflicted upon the Czech nation. They proclaimed themselves citizens of the German Reich, thus committing high treason. They must, it is said, bear the consequences of their actions. None of the facts mentioned can be confuted, for the events of the last few years are testified by an infinite number of witnesses, both living and dead.

This chapter is, therefore, closed *politically*. But, although it has ceased to be a political problem, there has remained in the minds of many one very important question. Was the transfer justifiable *morally*? Does it not constitute a *too cruel* punishment? Was it not that the Germans in Czechoslovakia made a tragic, but *transient* and *momentary*, political *mistake* which was not, perhaps, consistent with their *general* mentality and their *historic* attitude? Could not this error on the part of the German minority have been rectified by its sub-

sequent education? The transfer would, indeed, not be justified, if it were prompted by passion, vindictiveness and a desire to gain possession of German property. An answer to these doubts has not yet been given in full to other countries, and, for that reason, there is evidence in more than one place, particularly in ecclesiastical circles, of sympathy for the transferred German minority; it is even doubted whether the action carried out by Czechoslovakia was *morally* justifiable. Moral and Christian questions of that kind are comprehensible. If Czechoslovakia can give satisfactory answers to them and can put forth adequate *spiritual* and *moral* reasons for transferring to Germany over two million German inhabitants, then there has not been laid in the foundations of the new Republic anything that might incriminate Czechoslovakia in the judgment of history. For history is a constant tension between morality and decay, justice and sin, and, according to the human view, its judgment sometimes comes late, but, ultimately, there is always in it the justice of the *One* who judges all human actions according to His eternal law. Its development is the language of the Creator who calls all peoples to justice and humanity.

The fundamental question is whether the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia was not just an outburst of revolutionary, transient passions, or whether it had more profound historical and ideological reasons.

What makes it possible for people speaking different languages to live together in unity in one State and what makes such a life even beautiful?

Czechoslovakia was *not* the only State with national minorities. Quite a number of Central European States had minorities which were always a source of trouble and various complaints. Then there are States with various language groups where one hears nothing of any friction. Belgium has the Flemings and Walloons, the United Kingdom of Great Britain has the Welsh, and Switzerland has French people, Germans and Italians. In *none* of the States just mentioned has it happened that a section of the population has wanted to sever

itself and join a State which is, according to the number of its citizens, closer to it from the point of view of nationality. This fact is not to be accounted for merely by the cultural liberty enjoyed by these citizens who live in one State, but speak different languages, but by something far higher. The State is dear to them and signifies for them, in cooperation with citizens speaking different languages, *high common ideals*, which cannot easily be defined, but which have embedded themselves in the consciences of all the citizens of the State. *This communion of ideals surmounts all differences as regards language and race.* Such harmony of spiritual life is the result of development which has been going on for many years, sometimes for centuries, and is often also achieved through a joint fight for higher values than those of language and national culture. Let us remember the history of the USA! This harmony cannot be replaced by anything else, by any other value. Where it does *not* exist, there arise conflicts which lead to the greatest political tragedies.

We must bear this fact in mind when considering the question of Czechoslovakia. *The German minority in this Republic lived alongside the Czech population for at least seven hundred years. The history of those seven hundred years does not present a picture of constructive collaboration, but one of a constant struggle of the German minority with the Czech majority and of the Czech majority with the German minority.* Consequently, the Czech historian František Palacký, who was imbued with humanitarian ideals, sees as the chief symbol of the Czech history the struggle of the Czech people with the German element.

CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT A LOOK INTO ITS HISTORY

In order to understand the causes and the whole physiognomy of this historical struggle, at least a brief survey of its development is necessary.

Germans were invited by the Czech kings to Bohemia as colonists at a time when the Czech population was sparse. This movement came about gradually from the twelfth century. The immigrant Germans were mostly craftsmen, miners and merchants, and they settled, above all, in the border towns, while the greater part of the Czech population was engaged in farming. Owing to their ensuing economic collaboration Bohemia definitely attained a higher standard than that existing at that time in the other countries of Central Europe and in some districts of Germany.

Seven hundred years ago nationality questions did not exist. The language of the educated classes in Europe was Latin, and at that time a knowledge of several languages was, for instance in Czech cultural circles, no exception. In spite of that, as early as in the 13th century, there were complaints in Bohemia about the expansiveness of the German immigrants. The Czech nobles complained that the latter were oppressing the Czech language and that they were demanding privileges for the German language to the detriment of the Czech language.

This problem was most clearly manifested in the 15th century. Whereas earlier the question had been as to how far the Czech language, which was that of the vast majority, should yield to the claims of the minority, in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries the conflict became more and more dangerous. It was no longer just a language dispute, *there appeared a deep ideological chasm between the Czechs and the Germans*. The German immigrants did not coalesce *ideologically* with the inhabitants of the country into which they

had moved, but adhered to the ideology of the Germans living in the various principalities of the chequered Germany of that time. They felt quite at home in Bohemia and Moravia from the economic point of view; they sought material prosperity; they accepted the rights which the country granted its inhabitants; but they *remained a foreign element* and lived, as one might say, in one country *alongside* the Czechs, but by no means *with* them.

This spiritual dissension manifested itself in its entire profundity in the historical moments of the struggle of the Czech nation not for its language, but for *spiritual, religious and human values*.

Jan Hus (John Huss), an adherent of the doctrine of Wycliffe and a true apostolic preacher, influenced the broad masses of the Czech people with his zeal for the reform of the Christian Church and for the authority of the Word of God. There was never any question as to the attitude that the Czech people would adopt towards his reforms; it was manifested by the fact that after this martyr's death at the stake at Constance in the year 1415, all the Czech nobles presented a protest against his death to the Council of Constance and that the Czech people, the peasants in particular, took up arms for the cause of religious freedom and reformation.

The situation at the *Charles University Prague*, however, was different. The University had been founded (in 1348) by the Emperor Charles chiefly for the Czech people, but it was to serve the whole of Central Europe. Its administration was in the hands of four different nations, so that the Czech nation had one vote, whereas the Germans actually had three votes, since the Polish national section was also ruled by them. Hus's Reformation was rejected at the University by the Germans, and it was only after Hus had solicited King Václav (Wenceslas), that the Czech people obtained at the University three votes and the other nations one vote. The German mentality was then shown clearly: it did not seem fitting to the Germans that the University which had been founded in the Czech land by a Czech King, chiefly for the benefit of the Czech people, should be directed by Czech Professors, and, therefore, the German Masters left Prague and founded

the University at Leipzig in 1409. This attitude of the German minority in the fight for the *spiritual* values in which they sided with the discredited world and the incompetent Pope, was sharply contrasted with the figure of Hus, who declared that he preferred a spiritually good German to a bad Czech. It was precisely on account of this opposition of the German people to the Czech nation that the Hussite wars, in which the Czechs fought for religious and moral values, were often looked upon by the German nation as a crusade against the Czechs.

During the Reformation in the 16th century the Germans in the Czech lands were, it is true, also influenced by Luther, with the result that, from the point of view of religion, they drew somewhat closer to the Czech inhabitants, ninety per cent of whom were for the Reformation, and this religious cooperation did bear fruits to some extent. But political and language difficulties grew greater: the rights of the Czech language became more and more restricted under the Habsburg rulers, and privileges were bestowed upon the minority. In Moravia Count Žerotín had to protest against the Czech language being eliminated from official correspondence, in which it had been in use for centuries, and he even threatened that he would not accept such communications. Germanization made headway. It spread from above to the nobility and into the towns.

The greatest change, however, came about after the defeat of the Czech nobles at Bílá Hora (the White Mountain) near Prague in the year 1620, which settled the fate of the Czech revolt against the oppressors.

The causes of this Revolution were of religious character: its purpose was to protect religious freedom in the land. Its failure, however, had immeasurable political consequences.

The Battle on the White Mountain represented not only a disaster for the Czech Protestant population, but also a terrible blow from the economic, social and national standpoint. The Protestant nobles had to leave Bohemia and were joined by their Protestant German fellow-believers: but this loss of good Germans, some of whom had sided with the Czech people, was far outweighed and surpassed by the

increase in the number of usurpers of German race. Three fifths of the Czech lands were confiscated and given to foreigners, chiefly those of German nationality, and the terrible economic power of the German minority dated from that time. The Czech nobles had to leave their fatherland on account of their religion, the nation was reduced to poverty, and its wealth came into the hands of German immigrants.

The confiscation of Czech property between 1621 and 1627 was followed by a Germanization which was at first purposeful and subsequently harsh.

The Czech nation which constituted the greater part of the population of the Czech lands, was thus forced, particularly from the 17th to the 19th century, to vegetate. There is something tragic in the fact that the Habsburg ruler the Emperor Joseph II., for instance, an enlightened, progressive and otherwise philanthropic man who granted toleration to the Evangelical Churches in the year 1781, has, on the other hand, gone down in history as a representative of the endeavour to make the whole Empire German. The Czech schools that did exist were exceptions and were really Church-schools. The German language prevailed in spite of the fact that the Czech people, particularly in the country, resisted this Germanizing endeavour, while the towns were exposed to an even greater attempt at Germanization. Many Czech people became thus germanized, as is to be seen by the originally Czech names of many Germans in Bohemia and Moravia.

The humanistic and illuministic trend of German literature as represented, for instance, by the poet Herder who was filled with sympathy for the Slav and Czech people, and its fights for human principles, could not change the situation. There started the era which was to see the tragic realization of what the German poet Grillparzer expressed classically in the words: „Von der Humanität zur Nationalität, von der Nationalität zur Bestialität“ — „From humanitarian principles to nationalism, from nationalism to bestiality“.

The Czech nation was awakened to new life towards the end of the 18th century and in the 19th century. It formerly maintained its classic form chiefly by reading Protestant

literature from the time of the Reformation, although the nation was outwardly Roman Catholic.

The revival of the nation and its advancement were brought about by hard fighting and sacrifices under German dominance. Prague did not succeed in getting a Czech Lord-Mayor until the middle of the 19th century, although it was Czech. The towns in *Moravia* were in German hands even though Czech was spoken there.

By degrees Czech schools were built. The older generation of Czech writers had received a German education. Czech secondary schools were set up only in the second half of the 19th century. In the 19th century Prague University was first German, then Utraquist (German and Czech), until finally it was divided into a Czech University and a German University, a strange fate indeed for a University founded by „the Father of the Country“, Charles IV.

What was the attitude of the German nation to these efforts at self-preservation on the part of the Czech majority? It continued in its old tradition. It had no understanding for the majority of the country's population, and most Germans adopted a *hostile* attitude to the Czech endeavours. The old mentality again manifested itself: ideologically the Germans from Bohemia were not really in Bohemia, but outside frontiers, and they felt at home in Bohemia only as long as they were granted the privileges of a *ruling* nation, even though they represented only a minority in the country, that is one third of the population at that time.

Political power, cultural means, and, above all, economic and industrial enterprises, were controlled by the German population, and only after a hard struggle were the Czechs able to free themselves in all these spheres. That accounts for the strange fact that at the end of the 19th century the largest Czech town was *not* Prague, but the American city of *Chicago*. It was not transmigration that took place every year, but the emigration from the Czech lands of thousands of Czechs for whom life in their fatherland had become intolerable. It was not only economic hardship at home and the prosperity that existed in the United States of America that led them to emigrate, but it was very often, and above every-

thing else, the *chance* of being able to live as *human beings* outside their fatherland. It was significant that it was just those emigrants to America and other countries who realized the abyss of the political oppression their people had to suffer under the rule of the *minority*. The Czechs even felt that they enjoyed greater freedom in the *Russia* of the Czars and emigrated there; for whole decades they formed there flourishing settlements. They kept their language, had their own schools, and now tens of thousands of them have returned to their old fatherland since its recent liberation.

The tension between the German population in the Czech lands and the Czechs was not the result of differences as regards language. The causes were far deeper and more tragic, owing to the mentality of the Germans and their whole ideological tendency. Two spiritual worlds stood side by side and were unable to find any common values or points of contact. They did not see any common ideals of humanity that would overcome the differences. There were no common values to be granted to all as a matter of course. There was no equality which is the prerequisite of fruitful co-operation, and no good will to accord equal rights. The two peoples were competitors and not collaborators. The State was for them only a form of certain orders, but not a safeguard of justice. It was natural that under these circumstances Czech workmen of Czech origin were compelled to send their children to German schools, if they were not to be deprived of bread and work, and the same thing applied to the employees of large German concerns. The basis upon which a joint life should have been built up was spiritually disturbed and shattered.

The struggle carried on by the Czech nation for cultural advancement, economic progress and equal political rights, explained the deep ideological gulf between the two sections of the country's population. *A large part of the German minority took up the cause of the Pan-German idea which took possession of the Austrian Germans towards the end of the 19th century. It is an interesting fact that the Pan-German movement did not originate in the German Reich, but among the so-called Sudeten-Germans. Their endeavours and ideology are really the well from which sprang forth the endeav-*

our to unite all Germans under one Government, even at the cost of breaking up Austria. For them every State form that preserved the distribution of the German people in several States was only a temporary arrangement: *their aim was one nation and one Reich.*

For Austria it was a tragic state of affairs. From a certain standpoint we can understand that the Germans really hated the historical idea of a Czech State and declared it to be *High Treason*, in spite of the fact that in the 8th decade of the 19th century the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph I. acknowledged it. But not even Austria which was a decidedly germanizing State and had no understanding for the cultural, political, economic and social endeavours of non-German citizens, found grace in the eyes of the German population of Bohemia and Moravia. She used all possible means to achieve germanization; she granted political freedom, for instance, universal suffrage, only under the pressure of the time, when this right had become almost universal in cultural Europe. Even this German and germanizing state-form did not satisfy the German minds of the so-called Sudeten Germans. Is there any wonder that these Sudeten Germans were against Czechoslovakia, when even *Austria* did not satisfy them politically? An *All-German Reich* was their dream.

In the German political life of Austria at the close of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century we come across names which now belong to history, but must be recalled in order that the development of the subsequent events may be understood. They are the names of such people as the politicians Wolf and Schönerer who had an excellent organization and received support from the Reich which naturally, gladly welcomed their endeavours.

They were then making and elaborating plans as to what should be done with the Czech population when the Great-German Reich came into being. The plans evolved by the leaders of that movement which took hold of the Sudeten Germans were just the same as those which Hitler had with regard to the Czech nation during the last war: *some of the Czechs were to be germanized, some were to be exterminated, and the rest were to be moved out of the Czech lands.*

THE YOUNG REPUBLIC

The first world-war crushed for a time these Pan-German aspirations. The Czechoslovak State was re-established, this time as a Republic.

Its inner structure and ideals are characterized by the name *T. G. Masaryk*.

Masaryk, who had himself been educated in German schools, was aware of the terrible guilt with which the Austrian Germans had burdened themselves, first among them being the Germans from Sudetenland with their expansionist (for instance, Anti-Serbian) policy and their germanization ideals. When building up the first Republic the Czechs were confronted with the problem of how to settle the German question, *the* problem of their history and of the struggle they had carried on for centuries. Many Czech people asked themselves doubtfully whether it would be advisable to give to the Germans, who had behaved inimically towards the Czech people, the same rights as to the other citizens, and more than one politician had in mind the idea of a purely *national* State. On the other hand there were others against this idea. The new era had started under the standard of *democracy*, and the belief was spreading throughout the world that *this* political system would save nations from new conflicts. It was obvious that Czechoslovakia would have a *democratic* form. *Masaryk*, a man of great faith, believed in the power of the democratic idea just as his collaborator Dr E. Beneš did and he, in particular, considered that a great historical chance had come to bind the Germans to the Czechoslovak Republic through freedom, and that it would be thus possible to create a State after the fashion of Switzerland.

It was in this spirit that the principles of human rights and, in particular, of the rights of the minorities were embodied in the Constitutional Charter of the Republic.

They were no *small* rights that were granted to the Germans in the new Republic. Their minority had the right to use the German language freely, both in private life and in dealings with State and other organs. The German minority had schools of every kind, from the lowest elementary schools up to the University at Prague and Polytechnic Schools at Prague and Brno. The civil rights of the German population were guaranteed. In Parliament the Germans had their own deputies, who were elected in the same manner as the other deputies, namely, by direct, secret and proportional suffrage. The Germans had their own press, and nobody could be restricted in his rights on account of his nationality.

There were, naturally, difficulties of a local character which is inevitable when citizens live together freely and democratically. On the part of the State, however, there was always good will and the endeavour to bind the Germans *ideologically* to the Republic through *co-operation*. For this reason, the Germans had for a number of years their own Ministers in the Government.

In the taking of the census, too, which was carried out with great care, a new system was introduced: whereas in Austria the inhabitants were enrolled according to the language they commonly used, with the result that many German-speaking Czechs were registered as being of German nationality, in the Czechoslovak Republic the citizens were registered according to their *mother-tongue*.

In the carrying out of the land reform the deciding factor was not the nationality of the owner of the landed property, but the size of the property.

It was under these legal conditions that the national, cultural, economic and political life of the German minority was to develop.

The attitude of the Germans to the Republic was, however, hostile from the very beginning. By Wilson's right of self-determination they understood that they were to become a part of the German Reich, even though it was defeated.

They would not acknowledge the fact that in Bohemia there was no purely German territory and that everywhere where Germans were settled a large section of the population was

composed of Czechs. It took them several years to come to the conclusion that their desire to be incorporated in the Reich would not be fulfilled.

A strong pretext for them was the economic crisis which took possession of many States including also the Republic. The whole country suffered from unemployment, and the consequences were, naturally, most to be felt in the industrial districts controlled by the German minority. Want does not discriminate between nationalities. This time, however, the Czech representatives of the State were blamed for it.

An immense encouragement to the German minority was the attention it received abroad. Democratic peoples in the West, assuming that they were right, took the Germans' complaints seriously. Private and official inquiries were made as to whether the German minority in Czechoslovakia was not *oppressed*, and assurances as to the rights the Germans enjoyed were often not believed. The increasing tension was necessarily further increased by a certain favouritism shown to the German minority in the foreign press which was ready to accept information concerning the unfortunate state of the Germans in Czechoslovakia.

MUNICH

When the situation had developed to this stage, there arose a figure which became the star of hope for the Sudeten-Germans. It was *Adolf Hitler*.

One fact confuted the complaint of the Germans that they were oppressed and cut off from their kinsmen: it was just because the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia were not hermetically sealed off from their kinsmen in the Reich that they had such very precise information on all the events in Germany, on the change in the ideology of the German nation, on the principal ideas and aims of Nazism, on the methods to be employed, and on the ultimate aim of that movement, namely, that all Germans forming one nation, should be united in one Reich, under one leader.

The development of events from the year 1935 is sufficiently known. In the election of that year *Henlein*, the leader of the Nazis, acquired for his party 1,249,530 votes, while the German Activists, the German Social Democrats, the German Agrarians and the German Christian Socialists, obtained altogether only 605,122 votes. The ensuing years swept away the Activists completely; even the conservative Agrarian party joined the *Henlein* party. The elections to the local representative organs in the year 1938 signified an absolute victory for Nazism which secured 88% of all the votes of German citizens.

Hitler publicly declared that he would defend the rights of his kinsmen in Czechoslovakia. The Germans in the Republic jubilantly shouted: „Es kommt der Tag“ — „The day is coming!“

At that moment England sent Lord Runciman to Czechoslovakia to investigate conditions and to present a report on his findings. It was a unique thing for an independent State to allow investigations to be carried out by one individual

from a foreign Power. The Czechoslovak Government received him trusting his fairness and impartiality. Lord Runciman carried out his mission in a strange manner: he associated only with German property-owners, and ostentatiously avoided Czech milieu. The report which he presented to the British Government was pessimistic.

Events took a dramatic, and for the Czechs, a tragic turn. At the moment when war seemed inevitable the Western Powers — England and France — forsook Czechoslovakia and capitulated to Hitler. The manner in which this took place will be for ever recorded in history: the ultimatum was given to Czechoslovakia by her former friends in the *night*. *Munich* represents the most painful chapter in the political experiences of this nation which had given itself, heart and soul, to democracy.

By the Munich agreement Czechoslovakia was, in the first place, divided up. The assertion that it was the *German* parts of the country that were to be ceded to Germany, turned out to be a great lie: Germany also acquired districts that were purely Czech, but possessed strategic and economic importance. The German minority in Czechoslovakia amounted to not quite 4% of all Germans; Hitler took with them 10% of the Czech nation and incorporated them in the Greater German Reich. *With the assent of the Western democracies, with every 30 Germans 8 Czechs came into Germany.*

How did the Sudeten Germans behave at that moment? Their joy turned them delirious, as is evident by the photographs of them welcoming Hitler in former Czech territory in the year 1938, and for the Czech people in that region hell was opened. In a few days they were pauperised. Those who did not stay in Sudetenland lost their property; they were not to do anything with it until a decision be reached with regard thereto.

Although the Germans in the Republic had been allowed to use their own language in dealings with the authorities, it was now a great illusion on the part of the Czechs to hope that they would be able to speak Czech with the authorities after being incorporated in the Greater German Reich. Czech schools, with very few exceptions, ceased to exist. The Czech

element was defenceless against the violence which burst upon them as from underground.

Europe was then startled, when she saw what was going on. England tried to redress the wrong she had done, by lending financial aid to mutilated Czechoslovakia and good work was done in Prague under the leadership of Sir Ronald Macleay. Financial aid, however, was not able to stop the blood which flowed from the body of the nation.

While short-sighted politicians were pacifying their consciences with the vain hope that the Munich operation on an „unknown nation“ would save the peace of Europe, the people in Bohemia and Moravia were living in gloom, with the frightful foreboding that Munich was only the prelude to the tragedy and that a still deeper fall was to follow.

In the eyes of deluded Europe Munich was a closed chapter. In the eyes of the Nazis, however, it was only the introduction to the final blow upon the heart of Europe, the Czech lands.

After Munich the Czechoslovak Republic, after being subjected to amputation, was only the shadow of an independent State. In public life, culture, political views, and in decisions regarding economic matters, heed was paid to Hitler, in order that his „favour“ should be kept and that there might be no cause for him to break his word when he said that his relations with the Czechs were definitely adjusted. After Munich Czechoslovakia was nothing but a satellite, a slave of Germany, and the nation had but one wish, namely, to be able to bear its cross and to be able to stand guiltless in the eyes of history, to contribute with its life and its dying to the preservation of peace, although it was convinced in its heart that Hitler's appetite was insatiable.

HITLER AND THE OCCUPATION

Events rushed forward, however, with unrestrainable logic. Through his machinations, Hitler achieved further disintegration so that Czechoslovakia should be definitely wiped off the map. At his order, which was in the nature of an ultimatum, Slovakia declared herself an independent State, and the next day, March 14th, 1939, Dr. Hácha went to Berlin.

Apart from the visits of the ministers of the Western Democracies to President Beneš at the time of Munich, there has been nothing so humiliating for a representative of the Czech people as that Berlin visit. Hácha, who was shouted down and had to be given injections to keep him alive, eventually signed for Hitler a declaration stating that he placed the fate of the Czech nation in his hands. That took place in the early hours of March 15th, 1939, while the evening before German troops had crossed the frontiers of the Republic.

The Czechs thought that the gates of hell had been opened by Munich. But it was only a limbo. The real terrors began after the establishment of the so-called Protectorate. German criminal law was introduced for the whole of Czech territory. The official language became German. *Karl H. Frank*, the organizer of the German „Ordners“ and a former member of Parliament in the Republic, became the deciding man. Around him was formed an enormous organization of different bodies which quickly penetrated into all spheres of Czech life and turned to account the local Germans knowledge of the conditions. *These local Germans became the most eager informers of the police.* The Germans who had been clerks in the former Republic acquainted the Germans from the Reich with all details of Czech life. *All Germans became German citizens;* the handful of German anti-Fascists was got rid of in a very short time. In all the Faculties of the German University at Prague there were only eight anti-Fascist Pro-

fessors; these were pensioned off and those that have lived to see the present era now receive pensions from the Czechoslovak Republic.

Right ceased to be right. The prisons were packed. The higher educational institutions (Universities etc.) were closed, and K. H. Frank reserved to himself the right to decide the fate of their Professors and lecturers. The concentration camps filled up. Executions were carried out in groups, callously, without the victims having been properly tried. Young people were „re-educated“. The inspectors for Czech schools were Germans, Sudeten-Germans. All public employees had to sit for an examination in German, despite the fact that 95% of the population of the mutilated former Republic were Czech. The regulations concerning compensation for personal damage suffered during the war applied only to Germans; only they were better fed; they also received higher salaries on account of their German citizenship, and the Czech taxpayers had to pay contributions that ran to billions for „German defence“.

This state of affairs lasted the whole of the war and from day to day grew worse.

It was as if the whole nation were in a concentration camp, pursued and persecuted. It could not live; it was only allowed to suffer.

What was the Germans' intention?

Despite the fact that they were masked by the press and by German propaganda, the real objects of the German order came out, above all, in the Hitlerjugend (Hitler's Youth), that is to say, in the Sudeten German young men. In the autumn of 1939, for instance, two young Germans in uniform got into the building of a girls' secondary school in Prague and had a girl (B. B. are her initials), whom one of them had been pursuing for a long time, called out. The scene which ensued in a locked room, was frightful, but the girl resisted. One of the Germans who spoke Czech tried to force her to yield by saying to her: „Come with me, you' will be well off. In any case, all the Czechs will be exterminated...“

That was *before* the tragedy of Lidice and Ležáky, the two

villages which were razed to the ground and the menfolk of which were exterminated.

The years 1939 to 1945 present a dreadful picture. The defenceless nation was left at the mercy of evil and violence; the people were tortured physically, tormented, imprisoned, persecuted mentally and ideologically, with subtle sadism.

In that period which will for ever be a disgrace to the German nation and to the whole European civilisation, the Sudeten-Germans played the leading role. Their denunciations, their part in the persecution of the Czech people and their entire attitude was but the culmination and manifestation of what had been in their hearts for centuries; at the time when the highest values of humanity were at stake they did not stand for truth, right and honesty, but wholly and consciously for lies, violence, inhumanity and brutality.

The entire problem of the German minority then manifested itself in its undisguised horror. *It was not one of language, but of greater, eternal values.* Man had fallen through a trap-door.

That was the balance of account of the life that the Germans and Czechs lived together for centuries in the Czech lands.

THE MAY REVOLUTION

The culmination of all were the atrocities committed by the Germans after the *May Revolution in Prague in 1945*, when the fight had already been lost. Photographs show what Czech women and children then suffered and the corpses of these victims were the last testimony of what the Germans perpetrated on defenceless Czech citizens when their cause was lost, and when they saw that they were rushing into an abyss, to be judged by human history and the representatives of world justice. *Even German civilians who had been previously armed, while the concealing of arms by Czechs was punishable by death, took part in the fight.*

Were the German acts of cruelty unknown to the German citizens?

Placards referring to the executions which had been carried out were in German and Czech; the sentences passed on Czech people were published in the press every day; the activity and methods of the Gestapo (Secret Police) were too open not to be known; and concentration camps were often a threat the Sudeten Germans themselves uttered.

All the Germans knew what was going on. None of them made any protest. They all took full advantage of the situation. This is true of 90% of the German population in the Republic.

After victory had been achieved the Czech nation was faced with the question as to what the answer would be to all that.

It was feared that there would be terrible bloodshed in the settling of accounts for the preceding years, for, besides the now defeated Germans, there were hundreds of thousands of Czechs who had undergone physical torture, who had lost

their fathers and sons, there were relatives of over 100,000 executed Czechs, there were young people who had lost their youth in working as German slaves in factories, there were economically impoverished people, — the entire property of the Germans did not represent a quarter of the material damage caused by the occupation —, there were the recollections of Lidice and Ležáky, of the gas-chambres and of the places where executions had been carried out by means of axes on mass production lines.

The number of the German victims of the days of the Revolution was, on the whole, very small. The nation did not resort to the means which would have been employed by Hitler or K. H. Frank, and for which enough Germans would always have been found to carry them into effect.

It was decided unanimously that the Germans would be moved out of Czechoslovakia.

What led to that decision?

It was, obviously, not an act of *vengeance* or mere *punishment*, although some Czechs certainly were inclined to be vindictive. Revenge would have been accompanied by bloodshed, and the guardians of public order would have lost control.

NATIONALISM

Was not the transfer of the Germans an expression of blind Czech *nationalism*?

That word is to-day a veritable bugbear of the time. There is no doubt that nationalism has expanded in Europe and that it is becoming a danger, despite the fact that German Nazism has been vanquished. Political and military defeat does not mean that the *idea* has been crushed; the latter sometimes makes its way from vanquished to the *victorious*. Did not *Czechoslovakia*, by adopting the very methods and ideals against which she had fought when they were those of the adversary, become just an instance of that historical fact?

It is necessary to go to the root of the problem.

What is true nationalism?

Is it ardent love for the nation? If it is, we should then have to ask ourselves which nation is not, in *that* respect, *nationalistic*. The English, the Norwegians, the Swedes, the French, and a great number of other peoples, love their nations and are *rightfully proud* of them.

The *substance* and danger of *nationalism* lie in something else. Nationalism comes into being where *nation, language* and *race* become the *highest value*, all other values, whether they be *truth, right, justice, love, honesty* or *humanity*, having to be *subjected thereto*. The Germans became a danger not through their love for the nation, but owing to the fact that the nation, race, blood and language became for them *absolute values, to which everything else was to be subservient*. That is why the civilized world rose up against them and they had to be defeated.

Against that nationalism which was monstrous and a danger to the world, we can and must set up the other kind of nationalism, if we are going to call it by that name. *This other nationalism is a love for the nation which leads the*

people to make sacrifices for the preservation of the nation, but it is a love which at the same time respects moral, spiritual and eternal principles which call for justice and for co-operation between nations; it is a love that does not trample upon human rights, for it is governed by absolute principles and not by mere egoism of the nation; its culture is not restricted, but is of a world character; its confines are not kinsmen, but mankind, for it respects mankind and humanity.

In Czechoslovakia these two kinds of nationalism came into conflict.

On the one hand there was *German nationalism*. It culminated in the cult of blood and power and of domination over the rest of the world. If we analyse the history of German nationalism, we see that it was just this opportunity which the German element in Bohemia had in the 17th century to enrich itself at the expense of the right, spiritual values and humanity, that helped in a terrible manner to bring it into being. The mentality of the Sudeten-Germans which was ultimately their doom, developed out of the atmosphere of robbery which characterised the seventeenth century in Bohemia. *It was not only a question of language; the attitude of the German element was an expression of profound spiritual decline and moral dissolution, the idea of domination having ceased to be an evil and having become a virtue.*

Confronting that German nationalism was the *Czech nationalism*, if we are to call the attitude of the Czech people by that name. What gave rise to it? It developed on a *spiritual* foundation, particularly during the Hussite era, when the nation fought for *human* values so vehemently that it became the most glorious chapter in Czech history. *It was not the ideal of conquest and violence, but zeal for the all-Christian idea that united the Czechs as never before; ardent love for the nation was combined with love for the spiritual life of the nation; it was not prompted by the longing for domination, but was willing to die in order that honour might be preserved.* It is quite true that much of that idealism vanished with the centuries, but both the historian Palacký and the Philosopher T. G. Masaryk agree that the essence of Czech

national life was the longing for humanity. Masaryk said: „Not Caesar, but Jesus is the meaning of our history!"

If it was through nationalism that the Czech nation did not allow itself to be germanized for centuries, then such nationalism is to the nation's credit. Czech nationalism at the time of Munich was expressed in the nation's submission to the decision of others, no matter how unjust that decision was; it did so in the interests of world peace. From its establishment in the year 1918, the Czechoslovak Republic was a pillar of democracy and the most loyal collaborator of the League of Nations.

When the future of the German minority which had so discredited itself in history, was being decided, *the question came up as to whether all the spiritual traditions that the Czechs had stood for and fought for had really lost their power and significance. Was there no other factor in it than nationalism, when that historic decision was being reached?*

With the transfer of the Germans from Czechoslovakia, Germany's post-war *internal troubles* were certainly augmented. Emigrants are not a welcome element in a country which has had to bear so many consequences of the pertinacity with which it blindly obeyed Hitler's orders to fight to the last. *It would, however, be an illusion for the world to expect that the situation would be better if the Germans had stayed in Czechoslovakia.* It is an indisputable fact that the Sudeten Germans played a very great part, greater in a certain sense than the Germans in the Reich, in Hitler's conquering tactics. *If they had stayed in Czechoslovakia which is one of the victorious States, they would, naturally, have had a share in her advantageous position. Being in a far more favourable situation than the rest of the Germans, they would have been rewarded for their treachery.*

Objections may be raised to that standpoint. Would it not have been better for Czechoslovakia to punish individual Germans and to allow the continuing existence of a considerable German minority in the Republic also in the future?

That would have meant considerable bloodshed, and the interests of *humanity* which are to-day emphasized more and more, would undoubtedly have led the rest of the world to

admonish the Czechs that they should grant full human rights to the German minority in their country. We would get *another Munich*. The Czechoslovak problem with the German minority would have continued to be a problem, and in a short time, the other nations would again be asked to find a solution. In spite of the difficulties which arose temporarily, it was necessary to provide a *definite* answer to the question. The answer was the *transfer* of the Germans.

This eventuality was not unknown to the politicians in the West. In his book „Where are we heading“? Mr. *Sumner Welles* says:

„In my belief, the minority problems cannot be solved through frontier and territorial readjustments alone. Populations must be transferred under international control, even though cases of such transfers may involve a million human beings.

There are many warm-hearted, sincere persons who bitterly oppose this. They inveigh against any programme which may call for uprooting families from land which may have been in the same line for hundreds of years. But if history, and especially European history has taught us anything, it must have taught us that the minority questions of Europe have been an eternal menace to friendly relations between peoples, a constant stimulant of fanatical nationalism, and a frequent incentive to war. Isn't it better, considering the appalling tragedy in Europe which we now confront, to get through with all the heartaches in this generation, when they may be an inevitable consequence of planning for a peaceful and happier world, and thus prevent new heartaches and tragedies in the generations to come?“

According to the resolution passed at the Potsdam Conference the transfer of the Germans was to be carried out in a humane manner. If we take into consideration the transport difficulties, the revolutionary confusion and the mood of people who often came across their torturers, the task was a gigantic one. At first there did occur acts of cruelty, but after the return of President Beneš and the Government to

Czechoslovakia the orders were, on the whole, observed. When they were not, the Czechs responsible were reprimanded and matters were set right. Considering all the preceding circumstances and the period of general revolution, there were far fewer of such excesses than was feared. Where they did occur they are certainly to be regretted.

CHURCHES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

It was necessary to give first those historical facts in order to understand the *ideological* atmosphere in which the *Churches in Czechoslovakia* lived. They do not exist in empty space; they were and are, like all the other Churches in the world, closely connected with the people they serve and in whom they form a spiritual community.

The German problem lay like a heavy weight on Christian life. When the matter of the transfer was being decided, this problem was not so simple for the Churches as for the politicians. The Christian Church must always ask itself whether an action on the part of the nation is sufficiently justified from the *Christian* point of view and *whether, for example in the question of the German minority, the Christian forces could not hope, on the basis of their experience and contacts as believers in Jesus Christ, that the problem might be solved otherwise than by the transfer which certainly brought great sufferings upon the German population.*

What were the relations of the Czech Christian Churches with the Germans in Czechoslovakia?

First there is the *Roman Catholic Church*, the largest Church in Czechoslovakia; it is an international organization, governed by one head, and has its network of information and Vatican traditions.

Then there is the *Czechoslovak Church* which came into existence after the establishment of the Republic by secession from the Roman Catholic Church; it had *no* traditional religious or other contacts with the Germans, and, from the very outset, took up a purely national attitude.

Lastly, there is in Czechoslovakia a number of *Protestant Churches* which are independent as regards their administration, but which have old tradition and contacts with Churches abroad and their theologies; naturally, they had also

contacts with the *German Evangelical Church*, with its theology and ideology.

These Protestant Churches, on account of their old relations with German Protestantism, were confronted with a very delicate question.

CZECHS AND GERMANS ON COMMON GROUND

In the 15th century the Germans waged wars against the Hussites in a strongly national spirit. But in *Luther's* time very friendly contacts were established. Both the adherents of the old Hussite doctrine (the Utraquist Church and the Czech Brethren — *Unitas Fratrum*) who carried out the Reformation in full, revered Luther, and the German reformer paid great attention to them, as is evidenced in his writings. Utraquist priests were ordained at Wittenberg, while in Bohemia many Germans declared themselves adherents of the Lutheran Reformation. At the beginning of the 17th century they even had their own church in Prague.

That was the glorious era of the collaboration of Evangelical Christians despite political troubles.

Some Germans also took part in the revolt of the Czech nobles against the religious oppression of the Habsburgs and bore the consequences together with the Czech nation.

That beautiful chapter was closed by the disaster after the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620. There remained in the Czech lands only *Roman Catholic Germans*.

From the Battle of the White Mountain until the Edict of Toleration in 1781 the Protestant Church was prohibited in Austria and in the Czech lands. At that time, however, *the contacts between the secret Czech Protestants and their German fellow-believers were very brotherly*. The leaders of the Czech Protestant Churches emigrated from Bohemia and Moravia to Poland, Prussia and other parts of Germany; there they kept their language and faith for a long time. They were joined in Germany by thousands of secret Protestants who left their fatherland secretly and of their own accord later, in the 18th century. Many of them soon became amalgamated with the German population, and to-day their names appear in an altered form. The ancestors of the famous

German theologian Adolf Harnack, for instance, were obviously of Czech origin, their surname being the Czech name Hornák. In Berlin the Czechs had their own church and their own Czech Pastors. The town of *Herrnhut*, the inhabitants of which were Czech emigrants, was created in the 18th century and the Church of the *Moravian Brethren* was established. In Germany there were thus preserved many precious records of the Czech Reformation, in particular, the archives of the *Unitas Fratrum* at *Herrnhut* and the libraries at *Zittau* and other places.

During the period of religious oppression Czech secret preachers came from Germany to give strength and encouragement to the secret Protestants in the Czech lands by means of sermons and books and by giving them hope that freedom would come.

If it had not been for the help they received from their German fellow-believers, the situation of the secret Protestants in the Czechs lands would have become far more hopeless. At that time Czech literature was preserved and published in Germany, in particular the Czech Bible, hymnals and prayer-books.

FAILURE OF AUSTRIA AND PAN-GERMANISM

In the year 1781 the Emperor Joseph II. finally allowed the Protestant Church to be re-established, either as a Reformed Church or as a Lutheran Church. At first it was able to exist only with great difficulty and was merely tolerated; only in the year 1861 did it secure complete freedom and extensive autonomy. The so-called Protestant Edict of 1861 became the Magna Charta of all Protestants who formed and were representing *one* body notwithstanding their language, the Protestant Germans, Czechs and Poles being included into it. Most of the Czechs adopted the *Helvetic* Confession and established a Reformed Church, while most of the Protestant Germans adopted the *Augsburg* Confession and established a *Lutheran* Church.

What were the relations between the Czech and German Protestants in this new era?

They were given one *great opportunity* to begin with; all the parishes and both Churches were united under *one* administration, the Evangelical Supreme Church Council at Vienna which had two sections, namely the Lutheran and the Reformed. It was a joyous fact both from the church and from the religious point of view: *one* Church without any language difference! *They could show in a State, the foundations of which were beginning to totter just on account of nationality disputes, that co-operation was possible.*

The situation was, however, very different in practice from what it was in theory.

In the first place, *the Supreme Church Council at Vienna was dominated by the old spirit of Austrian Germanism.* It very often happened in cases where purely religious interests should have been the deciding factor that the language interest became prominent. That *Supreme Council of the Churches became an instrument of germanization* and its tendency

did not change even when the Czech nation achieved considerable political recognition in Austria herself.

A classical example was the *Reformed section of the Supreme Council*. The members of that section consisted of Czech councillors, but they were allowed to send to the Czech parishes communications in *German* only. When communications in Czech were afterwards sent to elders and sessions of the congregations, they were always translations of the German originals, which were enclosed with the Czech translations, despite the fact that *nobody* in the sessions understood the German texts. The decrees whereby Pastors were appointed were in German only.

This situation continued to exist until the collapse of Austria in 1918. *Centralization of the Church Government did not prove to be the very thing which the Church needed. The spirit which pervaded was more political and germanizing than religious.*

The scene of this attitude was the *Faculty of Protestant Theology at Vienna*. It served all the Protestant congregations and both Churches in the Empire and had a unique opportunity to bridge over the national differences which were shaking the monarchy and to set an example of the fraternal co-operation of Christians, irrespective of their language. Instead of that *the Faculty became a hotbed of language conflicts*, and was, from the theological and religious point of view, on a very low level. Its German professors looked upon it as a halfway station to the Faculties in Germany. Czech students experienced there bitter years of religious disappointment, while fights were carried on in an absolutely Nazi spirit regarding, for instance, a Czech chair of Theology. Apart from conflicts there were no contacts between the students; they were as alien to each other as non-Christian members of foreign races, even though there were only about 30—40 Students in the Faculty. The German students were organized in the Wartburg Association, and their way of life was to be seen from the scars on their faces after the duels they had fought in the manner usual among German students of secular Faculties. In the year 1904 there were even brawls between the students. Under such conditions it

was a wonder that the graduates from that Faculty did not become religious cynics. Among the professors, an exception was the professor of Reformed dogmatics, Dr. Böhl, a real father also of Czech Students and an influential representative of the orthodox Reformed Theology. *England, Scotland and Switzerland as well as some Universities in Germany were an oasis and a boon for the Czech students of Divinity who were able to study there.* They saved many Pastors from nihilism or at least from superficiality.

Tolerant Professors were an exception among the Germans in Vienna. Closest to the Czechs was the historian, Professor Loesche, but even he, who was far above the rest, could not desist from writing in one of his essays on *Hus* that Hus was a good Christian *although* he was a Czech!

Under these circumstances the establishment of an independent Czech Theological Faculty was a necessity. It was not allowed, however, and it came into being only after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. The Hus Faculty of Protestant Theology was founded in Prague in the year 1919.

Besides the German Faculty of Protestant Theology in Vienna, the *Gustav Adolph Society* in Austria provided a second rare opportunity for co-operation irrespective of nationality. It was set up to aid the Protestant parishes and its members consisted not only of Germans, but also of Czechs and Poles. But even in that Society the exclusiveness of the Germans was manifested in a really tragic manner. The minutes of the meetings held in the years round about 1900 and in the subsequent years, that is, long before Hitler came into power, are full of allusions to language disagreements. The meetings were stormy, and at that time the Czech superintendent Dr. Císař wrote an article showing the trend of the development: it was union of denominations and division as regards language. *The end of unity!*

The Gustav Adolph Society did very fine work in the aid it rendered to the Czech parishes. It was a strange thing that the Protestants in *Germany* felt far more linked, through the bond of their *faith*, with the *Czech* Protestants than did the German Protestants from Bohemia and Moravia. Instances

of the really *religious* spirit and interest of a good many prominent men of the Church in Germany, particularly in Holstein and in the Rhineland, in the spreading of the Gospel in the Czech lands were even touching. And yet, even into the structure of that Society there crept in a disturbing tone. During the First World War the Gustav Adolph Society asked the Czechs parishes that wanted aid to repudiate the activity of T. G. Masaryk who had then started his activity for the liberation of the Czechs and Slovaks. The reply of the Czech Protestants was plain: they would not let themselves be thus dominated; they renounced the aid and supported the man who was out for *justice*. When Germany collapsed in the year 1918 and inflation ensued, the *Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren* thought of the suffering German Protestant parishes and, as an expression of gratitude for what it had received from the Gustav Adolph Society, it organized a collection, which brought in considerable amount of money. It was handed over to the Churches in Germany.

What was the semblance and life of the German Protestant Church in the Czech lands after the year 1781?

With the exception of the Aš district, which formed a separate unit, the number of the German Protestants in Bohemia and Moravia was originally negligible. The German congregations outside Prague and Brno were small.

The German Protestants received great support in the *Los von Rom (Away from Rome) movement*.

Numerically it meant a gain for the Church, but from the spiritual and religious aspect it was a step towards a great decline, in that the movement was started by German *politicians* from Austria, and particularly by those from Bohemia, as a consequence of their *Pan-German* conception the aim of which was the union of all Germans in one Reich. This background was plain and was not determined by religious zeal or Christian interest. Austria was to be broken up, and the Austrian Emperors were strict *Roman Catholics*. Germany was to be extended, and the Emperor William II was a *Protestant*. It was therefore necessary for *political* reasons to work up to the Los von Rom movement. The idea which was a poor one from the religious point of view, but a potent one

from the secular standpoint, met with great response both in Bohemia and Moravia. A number of German Protestant parishes sprang up which were supported, in particular, by the Society known as *Der Evangelische Bund*. This Society was dominated by the idea of German expansion under an ecclesiastical cover. In Northern Moravia the industrialist Brass expressly declared at Zábřeh that one of the objects of this movement was to germanize the Czechs and thus „raise them to a higher cultural level“.

The spirit in which the movement was conducted is shown by the case of the congregation at *Broumov*. This German congregation broke away from the congregation at Šonov and a church was opened there. Prince Schaumburg-Lippe, a German Prince from the Reich, was among those invited to the ceremony. On his arrival he saw with surprise that the flags of the German Reich had been hung out, although this was in the time of Austria, and his sense of loyalty to the Austrian State form was so strong that he had his carriage turned round and went back without attending the ceremony at all. That was in the year 1908.

It is natural that the Greater German tradition remained and continued to live in those congregations and even the political attitude of their members was determined by the spirit of Pan-Germanism. It was unthinkable that in the church of such spirit there should be permitted divine services in *Czech* for *Czech* Protestants, and in Olomouc, for instance, the German Protestants simply ordered the Czech congregation out of their Church.

The congregations in which the Christian idea still continued to live receded into the background. Alongside Protestantism there always appeared *Germanism*. Even in old, good congregations it often happened that politics dominated religion instead of the reverse.

That explains why German Pastors were frequently among the leaders of the germanizing movement. One of them was Dr. Trautenberger in Brno, even in the days before it became a pan-German movement.

Co-operation between Czech and German Pastors did not exist. The Czech Pastors had faithful friends in the Rhineland,

Schleswig Holstein, Saxony, Halle a. d., in England, Scotland, Switzerland, Holland and America, but they had none among their immediate German neighbours. Professor Clemen of Bonn, for example, paid kind and brotherly attention to the Czech Pastors, whereas among the German Pastors in their fatherland they were regarded as an alien element.

The history of the German Protestant Church in the Czech lands from 1900 until the final fall of Germany represents a great religious tragedy. It will be the task of the historians to ascertain the causes that led Christian faith to be superficialized and to serve current political slogans. Very much to blame for this was the theology of the 19th century, which was not positive and was too full of admiration for the world and its scientific successes, while it laid little stress on the *absolutely* binding nature of Divine principles. Europe altogether, but most of all the Austrian Churches, irrespective of their Confession, suffered from theological superficiality. The situation was further impaired by the low standard of the Theological Faculty at Vienna. Professor Böhl alone stood out above those around him by reason of his devoutness. The Churches were caught in the vortex of the time, as if by a cyclone, and pulled down instead of rising above the foulness of the time and its methods.

The Church entered the service of man's disorder, contradicting God's design. The relations of the German Protestants to the Czech Protestants and vice versa were therefore bad, and they also had profound consequences in public life.

Furthermore, the *majority of the Czech Protestants professed the Reformed Confession of faith, and had therefore contacts with world Presbyterianism. Its strength, coming from Scotland, Holland and America, repaired the terrible religious damage caused by the existing local conditions, and saved the great tradition of the Czech Reformation, in particular of the Union of Czech Brethren.*

During the First World War conditions grew still more acute. The year 1915 was the 500th anniversary of the martyr's death of Jan Hus. Celebrations were prohibited by the Austrian authorities, and only religious celebrations were held in the Churches. The German Church, however, regard-

ed them as a purely *Czech* affair. They forgot that Luther in his discussion with Eck had acknowledged Hus. Politics were triumphant over Christian principles.

But the debacle came.

FREEDOM AND ITS MISUSE

The Czechoslovak Republic was established. This fact was received with sorrow by the German Protestants. They were confronted with the question as to how to adjust the church-relations. After the whole historic development it was plain that a *united* Church in which Czech and Germans were united could not thrive undisturbedly, on account of the different ideological tendencies of the two sections. They did not deny the common principles of faith, nor the fact that they were members of *one* Church, nor that their life in former Austria had common administration and that their Churches had been built by mutual help of the Czechs and Germans and by their common collections, and above all that the Czech Protestants and the Germans Protestants even in the Czechoslovak Republic were included in to the Protestant Edict of 1861, and that they belonged to the same family. But the *political* aspects were stronger than these facts appertaining to the sphere of Christian faith. And so it came about that the Czech and German Protestant congregations came under two separate administrations: the Czech Lutherans and the Czech Reformed Protestants united in one Church, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, while the German Protestants created the German Evangelical Church in Czech lands. After some tension between Aš and Jablonec (Gablonz), Jablonec became the centre of the German Protestant Church, and Dr. E. Wehrenfennig was elected President of it.

What is the picture presented by the *life of that Church in the Czechoslovak Republic?*

At first it had troubles, particularly of a financial character, with the State authorities, but these matters were settled when Dr. Wehrenfennig was received by President T.G. Masaryk. *The German Church was granted the same rights as the other Churches.*

It accepted this state of affairs with mixed feelings. Kirchenrat Dr. Held, one of the noblest pastors of that Church, an honest man and devoted Christian of Lutheran character, did not hesitate in avowing that, in his opinion, the German Church was better than under Austrian rule. It is a matter for regret that even before the defeat of Germany this gentle Christian was pensioned off by the Nazis, whereupon he moved to Germany and his family had to follow him. His is one of the cases which must be sincerely deplored.

The attitude towards the Republic of the other German Pastors outside the Aš district was *quite different*. They were in the Republic, but did not coalesce with it. In Prague, Dr. Wehrenfennig did not hesitate to deliver a loyal address on President Masaryk and to pay several visits to the authorities of the Czech Brethren Church, but, on the other hand, in conversation, even with Czechs, he never used any other expression than „dieser Staat“ — „This State“ — when speaking about the Republic, and „diese Sprache“ — „This language“ — when referring to the Czech language. The Germans could not forget that they had been members of the former ruling class and that they were now a minority and should respect equality of rights and not insist on privileges. Their thoughts belonged somewhere else, outside the Republic. They made no attempt to learn Czech in order to get a better understanding of Czech life. They led a separate life, though having the same principles of faith as the Czech Protestants and knowing that the separation of the Churches had not abolished the fact that they belonged to the same body of the Church of Christ and even more that in the Republic they had to continue the old traditions of the time when they were united also in administration. Regardless of all these facts which were acknowledged by them and before all the common legal fundament of the Protestant Edict of 1861, they were as if obsessed by the political ideology and a difference of language which sometimes bordered on an inferiority complex, where actions were concerned, whereas their mentality was dominated by the conviction of their national superiority.

In the time of the Republic there were, of course, *points of contact*, which, had there been good will, might have helped

to bridge over the difficulties. On the Czech side many attempts were made at a rapprochement and closer co-operation: Dr. Wehrenfennig was visited by the Professors of the *Hus Faculty*; an official visit was paid to Jablonec (Gablonz) by the students and Professors of the Faculty on the occasion of their visit to Herrnhut. Organ concerts were given in both the Czech and German Churches by Professor Schweizer, and on that occasion at the manse of the St. Clement's congregation a company was entertained including also Prague German Protestants, this as had never been the case before. But these were *exceptions*. The fact was that there was a wall dividing the two groups for *political* reasons, and that wall was not demolished by the official visit paid also by Dr. Wehrenfennig to the Synods of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren where the unity of faith and of old traditions was manifested. Something more than official visits was required to overcome difficulties so deeply rooted throughout the whole historic development.

For the study of Theology and preparing of Pastors for service in the churches there was established in Prague in the year 1919 the Hus Faculty of Protestant Theology. It was intended to serve *all* Protestant Churches, and it is a pleasure to be able to state that, from its foundation until the closing of the Czech Universities, its students included Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles, Frenchmen and even one Scotsman; but there was not even a single student from the German Protestant Church in Bohemia and Moravia. This Church insisted that its Pastors should not be educated in Prague, and this was allowed. It showed, however, that for 20 years the German Church was not anxious to cooperate with the Hus Faculty, the Professors of which were unceasing in their efforts to promote world fellowship and had secured for their institution world recognition in this respect. The German Pastors were educated either in Vienna or Germany. Their longing for their fatherland was thus clearly manifested; the German Church respected the Republic only in so far as it was compelled to do so by the legal code.

The Evangelical Churches in Czechoslovakia created the *Federation of Protestant Churches*. The German Church did

not join it, although it was requested both officially and privately to do so. It co-operated with the Czech Protestants only so far as it needed their assistance in dealings with the State authorities on certain questions under dispute. Such assistance was always rendered willingly and effectively.

In Czechoslovakia there existed the *Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches*. The German Church was represented in this organization and it must be said that Dr. Giesecke and Kirchenrat Knorek showed more than once in that organization their good will to co-operate. It often happened, however, that the meetings were taken up more by recriminations than by constructive work. The following case is characteristic of the attitude of the German Protestant Church: although the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Dr. Wehrenfennig did not extend to Slovakia, he visited the German congregations there to ascertain the local conditions. He did not, however, feel under any obligation to pay a visit at least of courtesy to their Slovakian Bishop Dr. Jánoška. When this was ascertained at a meeting of the Alliance, there was a danger that Bishop Jánoška would leave and that he would break off all relations with Dr. Wehrenfennig. Only the entreaties and persuasion of the Czech members of the Alliance prevented that from happening.

The German Protestant Church manifested its ideological dependence on Germany in an enterprise which was to serve as a proof of the ideological and religious co-operation of the Evangelical Churches in Czechoslovakia. At the suggestion of Professor Siegmund-Schultze, a book entitled „Die Kirchen der Tschechoslowakei“ was published in the *Ekklesia* series in 1937. It was presumed that an account of the life of the Church would be written by writers from the Churches concerned, and that is actually what happened in all cases, with the exception of the German Church. The account of the life of the latter Church was *not* written by any Pastor from Bohemia or Moravia, but by Lic. Joh. Pfeiffer from *Berlin*. The reasons for this could be twofold: either the German Protestant Church had its *expert outside* the Republic, in *Germany*, which is improbable, or it wished, by having a contribution from Berlin, — it was the year 1937, when political

tension was at its height — to have a *political alibi* in case it should be needed in the future, and to be able to prove in the Reich that even at the time of the Republic it had not co-operated with the other Protestants there.

No matter what the reasons were for assigning the work to the Berlin expert, his work was bound, on account of its content and form, to evoke only disappointment. The whole work is written from the angle of *germanism*; it is full of inaccuracies and it twists facts in a really exemplary manner. With regard to Prague he writes „Hier wird die allgemeine Not des Sudetendeutschums zugleich als besondere Not der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche offenbar“ — „Here the general misery of the Sudeten-Germans is felt at the same time as a special misery of the German Protestant Church“. The author who was to write about *church-matters* and conditions, intertwines his expositions with sorties which are purely Nazi in character, such as: „Prague, a very old city founded by the *Germans*, at one time the capital of the Holy Roman Empire of the *German* nation, the seat of the oldest *German* University, which, it is true, has been deprived of its name and insignia, but which still exists even to-day and is, together with the Prague Polytechnicum, the place where the *Sudeten-Germans* receive their education“ (p. 168). That is the way in which he writes about Prague, which was founded by the Czechs, as can be seen from its name, and about the University which was founded by a *Czech* king, chiefly for the *Czech* nation!

The entire description of the German Protestant Church in that paper shows its tendency. The political background is to be felt all the way through; no special importance is attached to religious interests or to the victory of Christ, but there is an emphatic reminder that the head of the German Protestant Church should have his see in *Sudeten German* territory (p. 169).

Professor Bednář who was one of those responsible for the whole book, was *not* given the manuscript for perusal before its publication, and he learned of its contents only from the printed book. Christian public opinion of the world was in-

tended to be, and indeed was, thus informed in an entirely nationalistic spirit.

This Ekklesia publication came out in the year 1937 at the time of the Oxford Conference on Life and Work. Even then the foundations of Europe were tottering and it was evident that events would be far-reaching. And at that time, when a clear voice of Churches was the greatest need, the German Pastors waited to see how events would develop *politically*. At first not a single one of them was a member of the Confessional Church (Bekenntniskirche). The latter, in its fight for the purity of Christianity, struck at the conscience. Subsequently, a Pastor named Hofmann, from Smržovka, who is to-day Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and was granted Czechoslovak State citizenship, although he was a German, became a member.

Sad though the fact may be, it was no secret that the Nazis employed the German Pastors to support their political aims. It would not have been otherwise possible for the Pastors outside the German Reich to be so well informed of what was being prepared. Among those who attended the Oxford Conference was Dr. Ph. Popp, Bishop of the Protestant Church in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Dr. Bednář had met him before at Oslo in the year 1935 at the W. S. S. Conference. When referring to Czechoslovakia Dr. Popp used the expression „Tschechei“. On being told that it was not polite, he answered: „If you knew what I know, you would not speak like that; Tschechei will cease to exist . . . At Berlin I saw a document . . . That will decide the future . . .“ On being asked *what* document it was, he replied: „I am sorry that I let the cat out of the bag . . . I shouldn't have said it . . . I can't say any more . . .“

Was Dr. Popp the *only* German Pastor who was informed of the fate that had been prepared for Czechoslovakia? If he, who was active in *Yugoslavia*, knew of it, it is all the more likely that *others* too knew of the plan, even if they had not seen the document referred to by Dr. Popp.

The contacts of the Germans with the Reich were obvious. At Jablonec (Gablonz) an assistant Pastor named Färber was sentenced for helping Germans to get into Germany. Since his case did not seem to be quite clear, due to the influence

of two Czech Professors of the Hus Faculty, President Beneš annulled the consequences of the sentence, so that Rev. Färber was able to continue in the service of the Church. Upon his release from prison, however, a *Greater Germany demonstration* of a purely *political* character was arranged at Jablonec to welcome him back as a political victim. That served as a proof: the Czech court had been *right* and *not* the Professors of the Faculty.

And at that time, when the existence of Czechoslovakia was menaced, a teacher named Mr. *Henlein* was at the head of the Sudeten Germans who were endeavouring to achieve their separation from the Republic. Henlein was solemnly received by Dr. Wehrenfennig into the German Protestant Church. The friendly relations of the Church with politics were thus manifested.

Events moved with great rapidity.

At that moment all the other Churches felt their responsibility for the attitude of the Christian bodies. The world was threatened with destruction. For that reason there came from the *Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches* the suggestion that the Churches, without regard for the political situation, should manifest in favour of the co-operation of all Christians. Professor Žilka, as Chairman of the Alliance, worked out a scheme whereby the Churches in Czechoslovakia should *exchange preachers* for some Sundays; a German Pastor was to preach in *German* from a *Czech* pulpit, while a *Czech* Pastor was to preach *also* in *German* from a German pulpit. Likewise the Poles and Slovaks were also to participate in this action in their parishes. The necessary preparations were entrusted to Prof. Bednář. Affirmative answers, promising collaboration, were received from *all* the Churches, but no answer came from the German Church, although it received many reminders. At the last moment Dr. Wehrenfennig sent a letter saying that the German Church would *not* collaborate and stating, by way of justification, that the Church would stand by its people in their political fight. The entire planned action was, naturally, thus frustrated.

THE GERMAN CHURCH AND THE BETRAYAL

Then came *Munich*, accompanied by the triumphant shouts of the Sudeten Germans and the terrible physical and mental suffering of the Czech population, especially in the places which were annexed to Germany. That was the moment, if any, when the Church needed to manifest its unity, to lift itself above the events of the day and to pronounce warm words of sympathy to its Czech brethren and words of admonition to their German fellow-believers. The German Church did not pronounce even one word of that kind, but said something else. Dr. Wehrenfennig welcomed Hitler in a high-sounding telegram, and what was worse, in another telegram to Henlein, in the latter's capacity as „Gauleiter“, that is, head of the Sudeten Germans, he stated that the severance of Sudetenland from the Republic meant that *God had answered his prayers*. The telegrams exceeded the usual assurances given to the holders of the State power, and were the political confession of the German Protestant Church. The Secretary of State, K. H. Frank, who was called „Bloody Frank“ by the Czechs, did not forget that in the future.

A German publication celebrating the severance of Sudetenland from the Republic contains among other illustrations two interesting documents: one is a picture of Dr. Wehrenfennig, and the other is a picture of a huge crowd of cheering demonstrators carrying flags bearing the swastika — and among the prominent personalities in the crowd is Dr. *Wehrenfennig*.

One chapter was thus closed. Its contents were in keeping with the tendency indicated by the periodical entitled *Der Deutsche Glaube*, the organ of the German Protestants, which was totally Nazi in spirit.

Conscience, of course, could not be completely hushed. When the height of the political aspirations of his nation had

been attained, Dr. Wehrenfennig asked what was to happen to the Czech Protestants. As a matter of fact he once wrote: „You helped us, and you, too, ought to be helped“, but in the year 1939 he said that *nothing* could be done.

Towards the end of the war, when it was obvious that it was to end in a catastrophe for the Germans, a reaction was to be seen in his case too. On the occasion of Professor Žilka's 70th birthday he wrote a short article in which he expressed the wish that Prof. Žilka should bear what had happened quietly and in a Christian spirit. Later he attended the Professor's funeral, and did not conceal his doubts with regard to the future. He acknowledged the trouble his Church had had with the Nazi organs, but his political views remained unchanged.

Taken as a whole, one cannot speak of any sincere collaboration on the part of the German Protestants in Czechoslovakia with the Czech Churches in the terrible years from 1939 to 1945. It is true that on June 21st, 1939, the German Protestants from Prague laid a wreath on the spot where the leaders of the revolt of 1618 were executed, but afterwards they remained silent.

The hard times affected, however, even some of them to the extent that they sobered up from their state of intoxication.

Dr. *Schenner*, Moderator of the Presbytery of the German Church at Brno, was a tragic example of disappointment. Although his mother was a Czech, he never denied his German views. At the funeral of an Austrian German officer in the year 1915 he declared that the officer had fought not only for the very old (that is, Austrian) Emperor, but also for the *Great* (that is, *German*) Emperor. This at a time when the Austrian Empire still existed. Upon being asked how he was getting along after the Republic had been established, he sorrowfully answered: „I am getting along as well as a German can get along to-day“. He was filled with disappointment and with sorrow at the establishment of the Republic and at the fall of Germany which meant the end of German domination, although for others it meant freedom. This enthusiast for the cause of Germany sobered down, how-

ever, during Hitler's régime which he had at first eagerly welcomed. He was pensioned off on account of his attitude towards a certain Jewish case, and he found refuge in the Czech village of Zádveřice, died in Czech surroundings and, at his own wish, his funeral was conducted in Czech. Thus ended the wonderful time that he had welcomed!

During the German occupation the Czech Church experienced hard times.

Sermons were followed by spies and reports on them were handed in to Kiese Wetter, chief of the section of the Gestapo for church affairs. He used to be addressed as Dr. Kiese Wetter, but he was an upholsterer by trade, as was revealed at his trial after the liberation of the Republic. He interfered in many purely church matters. When pastors moved to other congregations, he always asked whether they had not been transferred on account of their *political* convictions. Prof. Bednář was asked for his views on the Heidelberg Catechism, when he had said that, for didactic reasons, he was against its use in elementary schools for the lowest classes. His objection was interpreted as opposition to a *German* book. Entries in Church registers were first in German, followed by a Czech translation. The Youth Association of the Church was dissolved and had to be re-organized within the association for parochial work. At Moravská Ostrava it was not allowed for divine service to be held in Czech in the building of the German Church, and the Czechs were turned into their small building which was insufficient. The social institutions at Myslibořice were evacuated. The Germans forced the Church without success to issue a proclamation against Bolshevism, and when the Senior of the Church (Moderator of the General Assembly) Dr. Křenek refused to sign the proclamation and when the Curator of the Synod, Dr. Boháč, expressed the same attitude, both of them were dismissed from office and Dr. Boháč was expelled from Prague. Dr. Křenek was forbidden to preach in the neighbourhood of Prague. The Pastors were to be made responsible for the presence of Jews at Divine services; of course, this regulation was not observed. In Prague Rev. St.

Čapek was suspended for maintaining forbidden contacts with Jews outside the hours fixed for such intercourses, and the Germans tried, but in vain, to force the congregation to accept a German as his successor.

Many Pastors were arrested, imprisoned or sent to concentration camps. Pastor Mahovský was executed, while Rev. E. Pokorný died in prison. It must be mentioned to the credit of Dr. Giesecke, the Pastor at Litoměřice, that he then behaved like a Christian and himself attended to the arrangements for the funeral of his colleague in office.

The suffering of some Pastors and church-workers in prison was terrible. Some had their Bibles taken from them, because they „made too much of it“. A highly gifted young writer, Mr Šimsa, asked for a Bible when he was in prison; he was given a railway guide and told that it was *also* good reading matter.

Only in a few very rare cases did a German Pastor keep brotherly relations in a Christian spirit with a Czech Christian, and when such cases did occur, it was in *Germany*. In a prison near Berlin, the German Pastor Dr. Wolf became a real spiritual brother to Consul J. Sedmík, a believing Christian who had been sentenced to death, and he declared that the moment when the latter was taken to his death would be the hardest in Dr. Wolf's life, for he really looked upon him as a brother.

That was, however, an isolated case and it occurred in *Germany*. In the Czech lands it was quite different.

The *Hus Faculty* was closed along with the other Faculties of Universities. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren trained theological Students privately. The fight to save the library of the *Hus Faculty* was an exceedingly hard one. There was only one German Professor who showed some understanding for the Protestant Theological Faculty, and that was a German from the Reich. On the other hand, Professor Otto was an example of unkindness and harshness in his negotiations with the Dean of the *Hus Faculty*. He boasted about being an expert on Comenius, but he could serve as a model of unkindness and arrogance. He was ruthless in his behaviour. And this man, who was so hard

and merciless as regards the Protestant Faculty of Theology, was *the Curator of the congregation of the German Protestant Church in Prague* which fact he did not, of course, mention at his proceedings.

It the chief representative layman of the Church who was otherwise a man of culture, could behave in that manner what was to be expected of the other Germans?

TWO IDEOLOGIES

What are the consequences of this situation which has been outlined by a few facts?

From the whole historical development of the relations between the Czechs and Germans in Czechoslovakia, it is to be seen clearly that *the problem was of an entirely different and much deeper character than that of language. It was a case of two antagonistic ideologies which could never be brought into harmony.* It was a conflict between the Masaryk spirit and the Nazi spirit, or, as Hitler rightly said in his speech at the time of Munich, it was a question of which was to be triumphant, Dr. Beneš or Hitler. *The same antagonism was also manifested in relations between the Churches. Christianity was in the second place, while the political interests occupied the first place.*

When the matter of the transfer of the Germans was being discussed, the Churches were confronted with a great moral and spiritual problem. They came, however, to the conclusion that, in spite of its harshness, *the transfer was a solution which, in view of the revolutionary time, was the only way out of the situation which had persisted for centuries.* They felt that it was not a question of language, but of higher values. *The continued presence of the German population in Czechoslovakia would in the future have endangered the spiritual state of the nation.* It was not so much a matter of punishment as of the future development of the nation and State and of the elimination of causes of further conflicts which would, ultimately, again threaten Europe.

It is a regrettable fact that not even the German Protestants in Czechoslovakia came out successfully in the historical test. They were not strong enough from the religious standpoint to adopt a critical and independent attitude to what was going on. Although their theology was identical with the principles

in other countries, *their entire religious conception suffered from a lack of independence of what was going on around them*. They were influenced by *secular* ideas and did not withstand the current by setting up against it Christian and human principles. *Their church-life was politicized to such an extent that they have now been brought for trial along with their kinsmen*.

For the same reason, the percentage of proven anti-Fascist German Protestants who will remain in the Republic is about the same as that of the rest. The Churches, with all due regard for Christianity, cannot but recognize historic justice in the judgment pronounced upon the German minority in Czechoslovakia. It is their fervent wish that this hard and distressing time should lead to *inner* spiritual freedom. The political freedom enjoyed by the Germans in Czechoslovakia did not lead thereto. Will the privation suffered in Germany have a different outcome? The answer is in the hands of the Almighty.

THE TRANSFER

From the fundamental question of the transfer, however, must be distinguished a second problem, namely, that of its manner of execution. With regard to the latter, the Churches did not accept the development. Even though the Churches are bound to recognize a just judgment in what is being done with the Germans in consequence of the decision reached by the political organs, *the voice of the Christian conscience and the call of the Gospel must not be suppressed as regards the manner of the execution of that judgment*. Even in the case of a judgment affecting a whole body of the people, a *humane* attitude must be sought. It is necessary to have regard for the spiritual future of the German people and of the Christian Church among the Germans. It is therefore the duty of the Churches to *help* in a humane manner in cases in which individuals or official organs might go beyond the competence given to them. In such cases, too, the Churches must be guided by their christian duty towards their political enemies. The problem of how to bring that duty into harmony with the revolutionary times is an exceedingly difficult one.

The transfer of the Germans from Czechoslovakia was really carried out in two stages. The first was fairly short, but very tumultuous and difficult to control, for it was during the first few months after the Revolution. A public authority did not exist to determine the *manner* of the transfer, nor were there any international agreements as to the transfer procedure. Furthermore, the time at which the earlier transfers were carried out was still turbulent from too vivid recollections of the acts of cruelty committed by the Germans in the preceding days and years.

Fortunately, that period was fairly short and was really terminated by the arrival of President Beneš and the Government of the Republic in their fatherland and by the resol-

ution passed at the Potsdam Conference. After that, orders were given that the transfer must be carried out in a humane manner.

It all dissolved into thousands of individual cases, each of which had its individual characteristics and dangers.

The Church was, as far as it was possible, on the look-out that in the carrying out of the transfer there should be committed no acts of cruelty, such as were bound to occur during the fighting at the time of the Revolution, when those returning from concentration camps saw their persecutors at liberty. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, in particular, watched carefully the manner of the transfer and in several cases intervened to insure that it should be carried out humanely. This was not very popular work in the early months, when the vibrations of the Revolution were still to be felt. It should, however, be mentioned that in its efforts the Church met with complete understanding on the part of the central authorities of the State which did everything in their power to be of assistance to it. It was thus possible to intervene successfully in many cases. It succeeded, for instance, in arranging that German prisoners of war who were Pastors should be moved in a special way to Germany, so that they would not be exposed to long waiting and uncertainty. This Church also acted in a spirit of Christian brotherhood with regard to the property of Protestants.

The transferees numbered over two millions, and it was technically impossible for all the cases to be watched over by a small Church. Where there were cases of gross injustice, subsequent to the Potsdam Conference, those at fault were reprimanded.

The last question to be settled is the *future* of some German 4000—5000 Protestants who have been allowed to stay in Czechoslovakia.

What is to be done with them?

The first duty of the Church is to settle the *spiritual* question. If the State made binding promises that the Germans remaining in Czechoslovakia would be treated humanely,

then it is all the more the duty of the Church to see that they do not become spiritually impoverished. For that reason the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren agreed as early as in the year 1945 to receive them into its body and to care for them from the religious point of view. It has taken into its services a German Pastor definitely and is sustaining two others who decided to stay in the Republic. This measure will remove the fear that the German Protestants in Czechoslovakia will not be spiritually cared for. Divine services are already being held for them by respective Pastors.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

We are at the crossroads of history. The Church has also been drawn into the metamorphosis and it tries to ensure that in this confusion of the world the Divine order shall be really respected and fulfilled. *It must therefore not be filled with hatred or even vindictiveness.* It must watch what is going on in the world with deep *grief* and a feeling of *repentance* that such a development is possible in a *Christian* world and among people who call themselves *adherents of Christ*.

The transfer of the Germans is a tragic affair which will have infinite, unforeseeable consequences in the lives of individuals and of whole families, just as it is impossible to describe the depth of the grief of the Czech people during the last few years. It is, however, the logical result of the centuries-long development of evil and of the unsurmountable ideological differences and differences of character between the Czechs and Germans living in the same country.

The Czechs cannot but realize this fact and see its moral justification. It must, however, also realize that *history is the school of life*. The Church therefore must never be a mere *spectator* of what is happening in the world, without adopting a critical attitude to the ideological currents which mark the way. Its place is in the heart of the nations, so that it can constantly issue warnings of the consequence of any deviation from the Divine order. It will only have a clean conscience when it fulfils this duty and becomes the conscience of the nation. And only when the nations come to know the Gospel and have the Divine order written in their hearts and consciences can we hope that there will never again appear anywhere anything so sad as the relations of the German minority with the Czech nation. Difference of language is a great obstacle to understanding and co-operation between nations; but *the real and decisive danger is perverse ideology. Unity*

of the minds and conformity of consciences of all nations before God are the indispensable condition in order that the barrier which divides one nation from another on account of difference of language shall fall. The past development led to national division even in the Church. The development to-day points to *the re-uniting of Christians, irrespective of the language they speak.* They must, of course, be Christians who place *eternal principles above political and temporary interests.* In this respect the case of the German Evangelical Church in Czechoslovakia is a great warning for future ages. It is equally a warning to the Czech Churches that they should be the real conscience of the nation and, above all, the servants of *Christ.* Many truths in the world have, at various times, been reduced in all sorts of ways and modified in their expression. But nothing has ever shaken the fact that the greatest service to the nation is done by the Church which endeavours in all sincerity to subject the highest ideals of its people and its ways of life to *Divine law.* That is the programme of the work of the Church in Czechoslovakia after the departure of the Germans from the Republic.